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**POLK COUNTY USED CAR DEALER PLEADS GUILTY TO
METH DISTRIBUTION CONSPIRACY**

U. S. Attorney Paul I. Perez announced today the owner of a Haines City used car dealership has pleaded guilty in the United States District Court in Tampa to drug conspiracy charges. Ramon Luna-Magana entered his plea of guilty to a charge of conspiring to distribute methamphetamine after a jury had been selected on Tuesday in his case and just prior to commencement of trial proceedings.

Luna-Magana admitted that since the summer of 1999 he had been distributing large quantities of methamphetamine throughout Polk County, and that he had been generating \$20,000 to \$30,000 in drug proceeds on a weekly basis from his drug sales. Further, Luna-Magana acknowledged that he had laundered his ill-gotten gains through the purchase and sale of used cars by Luna Auto Sales, located at 700 East Hinson Avenue in Haines City, Florida.

On Friday, April 5, 2002, law enforcement officers from the Polk County Sheriff's Office, along with federal agents from the Drug Enforcement Administration and the United States Marshal's Service, had served a seizure warrant at Luna Auto Sales, and seized its entire inventory of cars. As part of his plea, Luna-Magana stipulated to that seizure of forty one vehicles, the inventory of the used car dealership. Additionally, the government seized

Luna-Magana's house and a total of \$114,185 in currency found at his home and in some of the vehicles. The defendant also stipulated to a \$1 million money judgment in favor of the United States.

In addition to the assets forfeited to the government, a total of twenty-eight pounds of methamphetamine were seized as a result of the collective efforts of the Polk and Osceola County Sheriff Offices, Florida Department of Law Enforcement, the United States Drug Enforcement Administration, and the United States Marshal's Service. This seizure constitutes one of the largest methamphetamine seizure in the region.

Luna-Magana was indicted with Jose Luis Zapata, Sylvia Jaimes, Aurelia Olvera, and Maria Guadalupe Magana. Luna-Magana and Jose Luis Zapata both entered pleas of guilt of conspiring to distribute methamphetamine, and both face maximum sentences of life imprisonment. Sylvia Jaimes entered a plea of guilty to maintaining a residence for the purpose of storing and distributing methamphetamine, and faces a maximum sentence of twenty years' imprisonment. Aurelia Olvera entered a plea of guilty to using a telephone to facilitate a drug transaction, and faces a maximum sentence of four years' imprisonment. Maria Guadalupe Magana pled guilty to misprision of a felony, and faces a maximum sentence of three years' imprisonment.

U. S. Attorney Perez stated, "This collaborative effort is a great example of federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies working together to destroy drug organizations in our area by putting the culprits in prison and bringing down the economic infrastructure which supports the illegal activity."

This case was prosecuted by Assistant United States Attorneys Anthony Porcelli of the Major Crimes section and Adelaide Few of the Asset Forfeiture section of the Tampa Division of the United States Attorney's Office.